

The University of Edinburgh

**Minutes of the Senatus Curriculum and Progression Committee (CSPC)  
held at 2.00pm on Thursday 30 May 2019 in the Assembly Room, Edinburgh Centre for  
Carbon Innovation (ECCI)**

**Present:**

Professor Alan Murray (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Support
Professor Graeme Reid (Vice-Convener)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (CSE)
Dr Paul Norris	Associate Dean (Academic Progress), CAHSS
Ms Philippa Burrell	Head of Academic Administration (CMVM)
Dr Lisa Kendall	Head of Academic and Student Administration (CAHSS)
Professor Neil Turner	Dean of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching (CMVM)
Dr Jeremy Crang	Dean of Students (CAHSS)
Dr Antony Maciocia	Representative of Researcher Experience Committee
Ms Ellie Tudhope	Advice Place Senior Academic Adviser
Ms Diva Mukherji	Vice President Education Students' Association
Ms Steph Vallancey	Vice President Education Students' Association (incoming)
Dr Adam Bunni	Head of Governance and Regulatory Framework Team
Dr Cathy Bovill	Institute for Academic Development
Ms Anne-Marie Scott	IS Learning, Teaching and Web
Ms Lisa Dawson	Director of Student Systems and Administration

**In attendance:**

Ms Sue McGregor	Director, Academic Services (incoming)
Miss Theresa Sheppard	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

**Apologies for absence:**

Ms Claire Vallance	Head of Academic Affairs (CSE)
Professor Lesley McAra	Assistant Principal, Community Relations
Dr Geoff Pearson	Dean of Students (CMVM)
Mr Stephen Warrington	Dean of Student Experience (CSE)

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

**2. Matters Arising**

- a) **Electronic business 11 April 2019 - Postgraduate Taught Master's degrees involving a dissertation/research project**
- b) **Electronic business 11 April 2019 - Joint PhD Programmes: Public Thesis Defence**
- c) **Electronic business 7 May 2019 - External Examiners for Taught Programmes: policy review**

The Committee noted the three items of electronic business which had been conducted since its last meeting.

### 3. Academic Misconduct - Revised Investigation Procedures and Proposed Future Work (CSPC 18/19 5 A)

Dr Charlotte Matheson introduced the paper, which discussed draft changes to clarify and streamline the Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures, and proposed some potential future work to bolster the guidance relating to academic misconduct.

The Committee approved the revised version of the University's Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures.

The Committee discussed proposed options for future work relating to academic misconduct, agreeing that its preferred option for future work would involve the creation of additional guidance, either for the University's web pages, or to be appended to the Procedures. The guidance would cover definitions relating to academic misconduct offences, the difference between proofreading and editing, and the use of text-matching software such as Turnitin.

In discussion, the Committee noted that the guidance document linked to the policy should be user-friendly and link to sources of support for students. The Committee also highlighted the importance of addressing the causes of academic misconduct, and felt that work done by Learning and Teaching Committee's Support for Curriculum Development Group to consider approaches to assessment should explore this issue.

**Action:** Academic Services to take forward work to produce guidance on academic misconduct.

**Action:** Academic Services to raise CSPC's comments regarding academic misconduct and assessment design with the Convener of the Support for Curriculum Development Group.

### 4. Update on Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions Project

Ms Lisa Dawson introduced the paper. The Committee reflected on the Special Circumstances and Coursework Extensions Project. The Committee raised some concerns about the level of attendance at the staff and student workshops and requested that the Project ensure that this is as high as possible. In keeping with CSPC's commitment to work hand-in-hand with the project, members requested more detailed feedback about the workshops, and the next stages of the project. The Director of Student Systems and Administration confirmed that these would be circulated electronically.

A finalised set of policy changes for coursework extensions will be brought to the next meeting of CSPC for approval.

**Action:** Director of Student Systems and Administration to circulate more detailed feedback from workshops to CSPC via electronic business.

## 5. Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances: Financial issues

Dr Adam Bunni introduced the paper. The Committee discussed the proposals to amend the grounds for consideration of coursework extension requests and special circumstances; the paper included benchmarking on the position of other institutions with regard to considering financial issues as a basis for special circumstances.

In discussion, the Committee agreed with the proposal to remove reference to “financial issues” and “death of a pet” from the list of circumstances unlikely to be accepted as valid reasons for coursework extensions or Special Circumstances; these will not, however, be added to the list of circumstances likely to be accepted.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to make agreed revisions to the Special Circumstances Policy and Taught Assessment Regulations.
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## 6. Support for Study

Mr Gavin Douglas, the Deputy Secretary, Student Experience, introduced the paper, which invited the Committee to approve the revised Support for Study Policy, for implementation in the academic year 2019/20.

The Policy, previously discussed by the Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2019, proposed a three stage approach to assisting the small number of students whose behaviour gave cause for concern; modifications to the proposals had been made following ongoing, constructive discussions with the Students' Association, The Advice Place, Colleges and other stakeholders. Chief of these had been focusing the policy on cases where students' behaviour was causing harm to others, rather than those where it was only causing issues for the student themselves.

The Students' Association recorded its thanks for the work in responding to its feedback, while confirming that it remained opposed to the proposal to add stage 3 to the process on the basis that they felt that it would remove the agency from students who reached this stage.

In discussion, members of the Committee agreed that it was preferable that the University should not have recourse to place a student on an interruption of studies against their will, but accepted that it was likely to be necessary in rare cases. The Committee was satisfied that this would only directly affect a very small number of students. There was agreement among the Committee that the priority was to ensure that students received good care, and to support the wider student community and staff.

The Committee approved the proposals on the basis that it would review the operation of the new Policy after a year, and that this review would encompass the operation of all three stages of the support for study process. The review should involve oversight of the data and evidence of how the Policy was working in practice.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to schedule a year-on review of the Support for Study Policy by the Committee.
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## 7. Proposed change to Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure

Ms Lisa Dawson presented this paper, which proposed minor changes to the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure to reflect the new online registration process which will be part of matriculation for continuing students from 2019/20. The Committee approved the proposed change to the Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure, requesting an amendment to the wording in paragraph 33.ii to clarify the definition of “anniversary date.”

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services and Student Systems to finalise proposed wording of the changes.
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## 8. Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy

Ms Theresa Sheppard presented the paper. The Committee reviewed the Dual, Double and Multiple Awards Policy, noting that, while there should continue to be scope for the University to enter into a dual award arrangement where there are no alternative options, dual/double/multiple awards were not the preferred option when entering into collaborative agreements with other institutions, and CSPC should continue to have oversight of all proposals at an early stage. The Committee therefore agreed that the Policy should remain unchanged.

## 9. Postgraduate Taught Assessment and Progression

Dr Bunni presented the results of the consultation undertaken by Academic Services regarding the proposal to remove the Postgraduate Taught progression hurdle and adjust the awarding criteria for Master’s level degrees.

The consultation had not yielded a clear consensus in favour of this proposal, with colleagues raising significant concerns regarding the impact upon supervisors of supporting students whose performance in the taught component had been weaker, and the risk to students of undertaking research for which they may not be adequately prepared. The Committee agreed that the current arrangements with regard to progression and award criteria should remain unchanged.

However, the Committee agreed that it would be desirable for the University to return to the issue in the future as part of discussions relating to curriculum reform, which should include PGT provision in their scope. The Committee also registered its concern that students would be charged fees for elements of the programme which they were being prevented from undertaking. The Committee therefore agreed that the Convener would submit a paper to Fees Strategy Group on the issue of partial refunds of fees for full-time students who did not progress to the dissertation stage of the programme.

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to draft a paper to Fees Strategy Group, for approval by the Convener.
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## 10. Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20 – Tier-4 Students

Ms Lisa Dawson presented the paper. The Committee approved the proposed changes to the sections of the Taught Assessment Regulations relating to re-sit attempts for Tier-4 students.

The Committee noted that clarification would be provided on the status of null-sits in relation to re-assessment and commented that the guidance accompanying the regulation would need some modification in relation to the role of the Board of Examiners.

**Action:** Director of Student Systems and Administration to raise requested changes to accompanying guidance with Student Immigration Service.

## 11. Draft Taught Assessment Regulations 2019/20

The Committee approved the draft Taught Assessment Regulations for the academic year 2019/20, noting the following:

- Regulation 27.9 (null sits) – it would be useful to review the operation of the regulation, should the decision to allow students to retain the highest mark achieved following a null sit lead to any undesirable results regarding students' attitude towards assessment.
- Regulation 64 (Boards of Examiners reconvening) –future changes to the Special Circumstances process are likely to involve late submission of Special Circumstances being passed to a dedicated central team, rather than the Board of Examiners. This regulation will need to be reviewed when the new process is due to come into effect.

**Action:** Academic Services to finalise and publish the revised regulations.

## 12. Draft Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2019/20

The Committee approved the draft Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees for the academic year 2019/20.

**Action:** Academic Services to finalise and publish the revised regulations.

## 13. Student Discipline Committee Membership 2019/20

The Committee approved new staff and student members of the Student Discipline Committee from 1 August 2019.

## 14. Student Appeal Committee and Student Fitness to Practise Appeal Committee 2019/20

The Committee requested that the proposed membership receive College approval before being submitted to CSPC, and agreed to consider proposals electronically once this approval had been obtained.

**Action:** Academic Services to circulate the membership to Colleges and seek approval from CSPC via electronic business.

### **15. Jointly delivered PhDs with European partners – public defence**

The Committee noted the paper, which summarised the agreed position on assessment for these proposed collaborations.

### **16. Senate Themes for 2019/20 Meetings**

The Committee noted the following possible themes for the Presentation and Discussion section of Senate in 2019/20

- Support for BME students
- A report on the Student Experience Action Plan
- Student and Staff Wellbeing

<b>Action:</b> Academic Services to pass the proposed themes to the Principal for consideration.
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### **17. Performance Sport Policy**

The Committee approved the proposals to consult colleges and other key stakeholders to produce accompanying guidance and examples of the application of the Policy.

### **18. Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting 22 March 2019**

The Committee noted the report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee on its meeting on 22 March 2019.

### **19. Any Other Business**

The Convener thanked Professor Graeme Reid for his work on CSPC over a number of years.

The Convener also thanked Diva Mukherji and Theresa Sheppard for their contributions to CSPC over the past year.